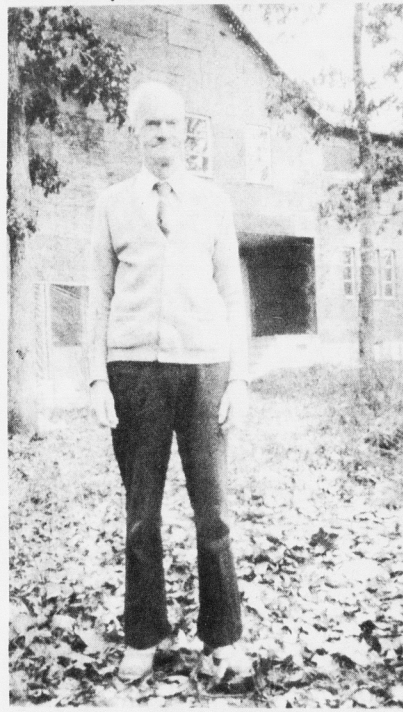


# Norton Vail reflects on 58 years of Boy Scouting

When Norton Vail joined the Boy Scouts of America at age 14, the scouting program was in its infancy. The birthday of American Boy Scouting is February 8, 1910, and it was 1918 when Norton joined Car-

bondale's Troop 2. Norton remained active with Troop 2 for the next 58 years, compiling more years of continuous active Boy Scouting in February than anyone in the Carbondale area.



NORTON VAIL stands in front of the house he has been building for the past seven years. At 80 years old, Norton still does the carpentry work himself. Norton's mailing address is RD 5, Box 3304, Ashboro, N.C. 27203.

Mary Norton Vail, (Copeland Ave.), Norton was baptized Samuel Vail, but he later changed his first name to Norton because, as Norton explained to the NEWS last November, "I was one of seven Samuel Vails in the family and it was confusing."

When the lanky youngster became interested in scouting, Carbondale had two troops - Troop 1 and Troop 2 of which Harry Hall was scoutmaster and George Lyoob was committee chairman. Norton recalls that he joined Troop 2 about the same time the old Carbondale High School burned. He was a freshman at the time.

Under the leadership of Harry J. Hall, Troop 2

purched two lots at Fiddle Lake in 1920 and erected a camp mess hall. Most of the building materials were donated and the scouts themselves provided the labor. To raise money for the real estate and to purchase some of the building materials, the troop sold "Troop 2 Boy Scout Lodge Bonds."

Charles H. York, 14 Eighth Ave., explained that all scouts in Troop 2 had to buy one of the \$10 bonds. Norton recalled that he was driving spikes into the mess hall when it was being built. "We were driving spikes into the mess hall when it was being built," he said.

When Troop 2 was first organized it was sponsored by the YMCA and met at the rectory, now stands. Several minutes later, the scouts were presented in 1922 and 1923 and all were great successes. "Harry Hall arranged the shows,"

Odd Fellows Hall, the building that now houses Fortner Upholstery on the corner Seventh Ave. and S. Church Street. In 1930 the troop moved into an old barn located behind Richardson's Bakery on N. Church Street, where the Baptist Church parking lot is now located, and meetings were held there until 1976 when the troop disbanded.

During his childhood and early years of manhood, Norton Vail worked for his father in the trucking business. That business evolved from Norton's grandfather's work. His grandfather was one of Carbondale's pioneers who ran a blacksmith shop in the barn that was later used as the troop meeting place. Some 800 young men were members of Troop 2 over the years and most would remember vividly the pot belly stove that heated that shed during the winter months.

The meeting room had "character" if nothing else. The wooden plank walls were decorated with Army surplus backpacks, plaster molds and animal tracks, patrol flags and insignia, and the ribbon won at various scouting events. There was no other place like it. The old shack with the red hot stove pipe would be considered a fire trap by today's standards. It was ironic, therefore, that buildings surrounding the shed burned in a number of fires over a period of several decades, but the dilapidated wood building that housed Troop 2 stood until 1976 when it was demolished to make way for the Baptist Church parking lot. Norton said that the only reason the old building survived was "Remember, the Lord was born in a stable!"

The number of scout troops in the Carbondale area grew by leaps and bounds. Ralph Dunn, R. 10th Ave., lived in Jersey and joined Jerry's Troop 1. He moved to Carbondale about 35 years ago and became associated with Troop 3 and has remained active in scouting for more than 50 years. "Saint Rose Church sponsored three troops, then Mr. Carmel sponsored a troop. Troop 11 and 12 were formed in Simpson. Dunn recalled that Earl Wilson and Ralph Dunn mentioned the names of other men who remained active scouts for more than 40 years - Angelo Molinaro, Angelo Oera, and Anthony Molinaro. Wilson, Dunn, and Molinaro were active with Troop 3,

while the other men have been involved with Troop 5, sponsored by Mr. Carmel Church. Ironically, this scouting period of four years to eight years under Norton's tutelage.

Most people would find it impossible to squeeze in any other activities, but in addition to being Carbondale's most seasoned scoutmaster of Troop 5, said that the troop sponsored by Mr. Carmel Church now has only six or eight active scouts. Troop 8, sponsored by the Carbondale Kiwanis Club, has approximately twelve active scouts. They are not enough interested boys to justify a troop.

Norton Vail became scoutmaster of Troop 2 in 1928. One of the first major projects he undertook was to create a drum and bugle corps. Robert Vandenberg, 74 Washington St., remembers vividly being recruited by Norton Vail to play a drum in the corps. "I wasn't quite old enough to join the troop at that time, but Norton asked me to join anyway," Vandenberg said. He joined the troop within the year and played in the band for several years.

It was 1931 when the band participated in their first parade. During the depression, "National Recovery Act" parades were promoted by the government and Troop 2 scouts performed in cities throughout the northeastern Pennsylvania.

Norton Vail was the band leader and he taught the members how to play their instruments. "When I was in the drum corps, we had 43 musicians," Vandenberg said.

Troop 2 Scouts were avid campers. The boys made their own tents and cooking equipment. The tents were in three pieces so that each scout could carry a portion of the tent in his backpack. The tents were reassembled at the campsite.

To fire the wood burning pot belly stove, scouts used to hike to the top of Lincoln Avenue, chop down dead trees, and pull them with ropes to their meeting place. They built birchbark, and even a sailboat for use at summer camp. There were skis, songfests, covered-dish suppers, window decorating contest, and competition among patrols. No Boy Scout ever complained about not having anything to do in Carbondale.

Boy Scouting was a program for boys who were at least 11 years old. In 1928, the same year Norton became scoutmaster, Cub Scout Pack 2 formed for boys aged 8 to 10. Joe Coogan was the first cubmaster. In later years, Norton became cubmaster as well as Scoutmaster. Every Monday evening was devoted to Boy Scouts and every Friday evening was spent with Cub Scouts. It was customary for a youngster to begin with

# Carbondale's Troop 2 was active unit

Continued from page 8

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the local pastor needed a substitute, Norton was the man to call on. The scoutmaster also filled in occasionally for Russ Edwards at the Waymart Baptist Church.

In 1959 Norton was asked to preach at the Baptist Church in Blooming Grove, Pike County. Norton told his wife, Alta Mae, that they would go for three Sundays and evaluate the church. The parishoners loved him and he remained their pastor for the next 17 years.

On February 4, Norton Vail celebrated his 80th birthday. In addition to building his house, he still enjoys gardening, is active in church work, and is building a studio in which he plans to take up painting. Scouting is no longer one of his primary activities. After 58 years of scouting (48 scoutmaster), he feels it's time to retire.

It is fitting that we pay tribute to the man who influenced the lives of more than anyone else. Norton Vail - he's quite a guy. Norton told the NEWS

that he intended to build. For the past seven years he has been working on his house doing the carpentry, plumbing, painting, and even some of the masonry work himself.

Construction work on the house all but stopped in 1982 when Alta Mae Vail (the former Alta Mae Pierce) died after a prolonged illness. Now Norton sees no pressing need to finish the project, so he works on the house at a leisurely pace.

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WOLF PATROL, June 11, 1928, included, front row, from left: William Fraser, Richard Slack and Hobart Thomas. Second row: Theodore LeVan, Thomas Ward, Robert Allen and Norman Neimeyer.



BEAVER PATROL, June 11, 1928, included, front row, from left: Ralph Atno, John Hopton, William Davis, Wilson Ramsay and Richard Monaghan. Second row: Douglas Lewis, Gerald Pittaway, Robert Neimeyer and Harold Kolansky.



CAYUGA PATROL, June 11, 1928, included: (front row, from left) Robert Lake, Arthur Golden, John Nelson, Harold Dippie and Hobart Thomas. Second row: Robert Dunlap, Charles Dunlap, Theodore Widmann, Charles Lyden and William Armstrong.



JUNE 15, 1928 - Troop 2 scouts march in a parade on Lincoln Avenue. (Notice the brick pavement.)



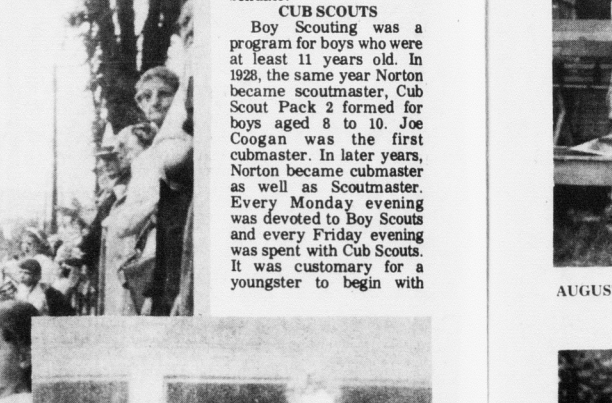
JULY 28, 1940 - Four scouts in front row are, from left: Howard Yepson, Harry McCulloch, Dick Smith and Garfield Thomas. In second row are Bud Atno and Bill Ramsey.



AUGUST 1976 - Assistant Scoutmaster Duane Armstrong (left) poses with Scoutmaster Norton Vail at Camp Hall.



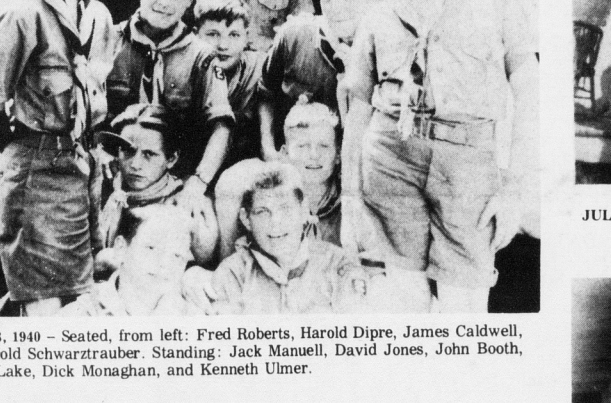
JULY 28, 1940 - Troop 2 scouts pictured from left are: E.J. Burns, Harold Kolansky, John Nelson, Charles Avery and Gerald Pittaway.



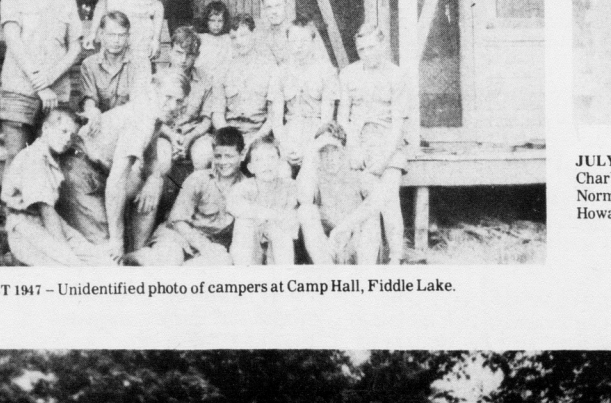
AUGUST 11, 1949 - Unidentified photo of scouts at Camp Hall, Fiddle Lake.



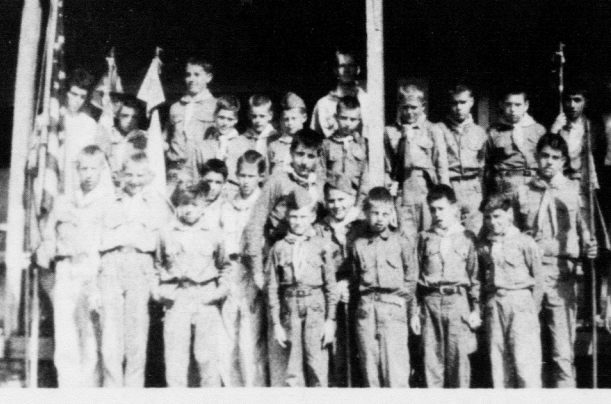
JULY 28, 1940 - Seated, from left: Fred Roberts, Harold Dippie, James Caldwell, and Harold Schwartztrauber. Standing: Jack Mansell, David Jones, John Booth, Robert Lake, Dick Monaghan, and Kenneth Ulmer.



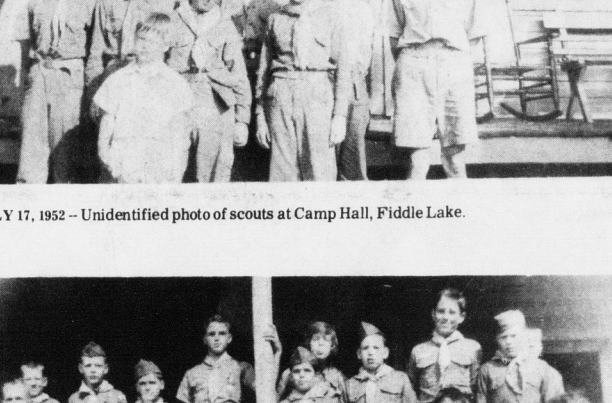
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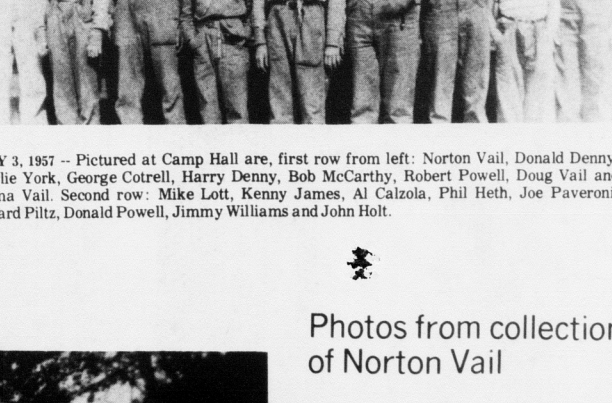
AUGUST 1947 - Unidentified photo of campers at Camp Hall, Fiddle Lake.



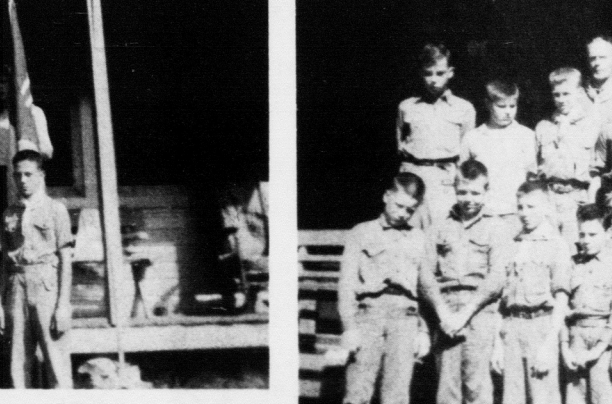
JULY 1935 - Scouts camping at Camp Hall included: (front row from left) Harry Denney, Jerry Denney, George Cotrell, Joe Burns, Jimmie Baker, Charlie York, Ralph Simon, David York, Russell Powell, Billy McDonough, Al Calais, Donnie Powell, and Russell Powell. Second row, Norma Vail, Tommy Coleman, Bobby Powell, Doug Vail, Kenny James, Howie Davis, Jimmy Tunkin, Louise Crocker, Bobby Parks, Howard Pitt, Anthony Rotella, June Vail, and Norton Vail in back row.



AUGUST 13, 1941 - Seated, from left: H. Dippie, R. Price, H. Schwartztrauber, Standing: J. Coogan, E. Burns, D. Jones, T. Widmann, C. Avery.



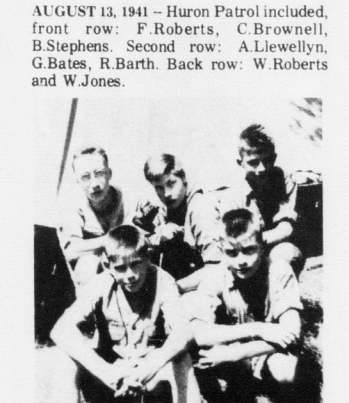
AUGUST 13, 1941 - Huron Patrol included, front row: F. Roberts, C. Brownell, B. Stephens. Second row: A. Lewellyn, G. Bates, R. Barth. Back row: W. Roberts and W. Jones.



JULY 1952 - Unidentified photo of scouts at Camp Hall.



AUGUST 1947 - Unidentified photo of campers at Camp Hall, Fiddle Lake.

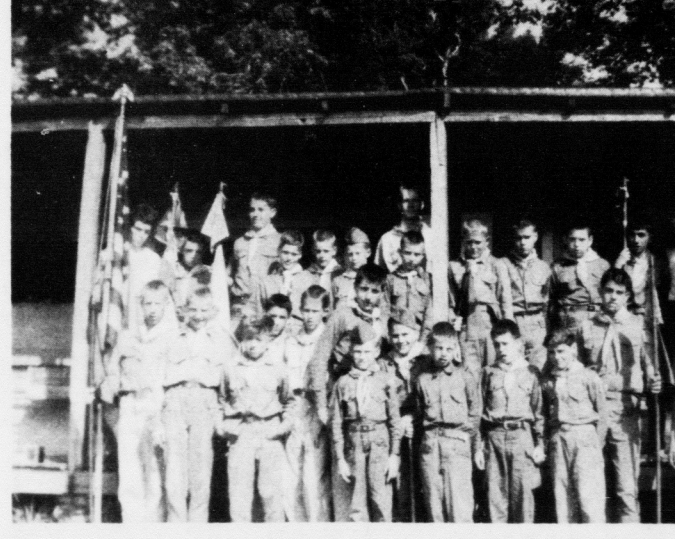


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JULY 1952 - Unidentified photo of scouts at Camp Hall.

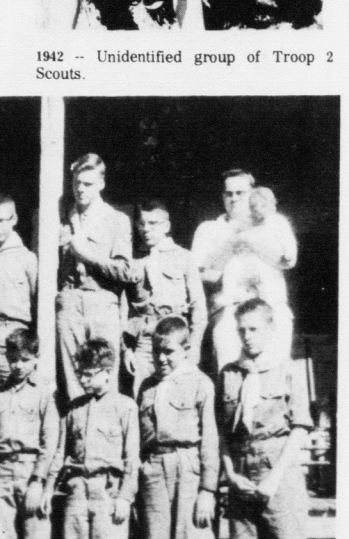
## Photos from collection of Norton Vail



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